

South Precinct Email Community Newsletter

November 7, 2007



Dear Community Friends:

Concerns About Hate Crimes

This past Friday, four incidents of malicious harassment were reported in the Seward Park neighborhood. Two vehicles owned by African American men were spray painted with derogatory language towards African Americans and profane language. A car belonging to the wife of one of the men was also tagged with derogatory language. At a third household, profane language was sprayed on their boat that was on a trailer in front of the home. At a fourth household, a Star of David was spray painted on a car belonging to a Jewish family.

A few things stand out about these incidents:

It appears all these incidents occurred sometime between 10pm November 1 - 3am November 2nd. These incidents all occurred in a very small geographical area, within ½ mile along essentially the same street. They occurred on the 4800 Block of 55th Ave S, the 5000 Block of 57th Ave S, the 5700 Block of S Dawson ST & the 5700 Block of S Orcas ST.

Not a Pattern, Trend or Epidemic of Hate

Incidents of hate crimes, malicious harassment, and racially motivated hate graffiti are extremely rare in our city and even more so in southeast Seattle. In the 17+ years I have worked for the Police Department, I can only recall a handful of incidents where racist, anti-religious or anti-gay literature was strewn about in the South Precinct. To my knowledge, nothing like this has been reported in well over five years.

This is not an epidemic. We do not have crowds of racist groups operating in our South end neighborhoods. No suspects have been identified at this point. It is possible what we have here is one, maybe two perpetrators who are angry about something or who were just carrying out a vicious prank. They probably felt that tagging other people's property with hateful obscenities would gain them notoriety and somehow make them feel better about themselves. The only difference between these perpetrators and other graffiti vandals is their choice of words and their impact on the community.

Don't let fear and suspicion win. What I know about this neighborhood is that these neighbors are very well connected with each other. They have one of the highest Block Watch participation rates of anywhere in the city. They have one of the lowest crime rates in the city. They take neighborhood safety very seriously. And I've also seen that rather than splintering apart and pointing fingers, they've rallied together and are stronger than ever.

Moving Forward and Next Steps

We take any graffiti seriously. We take hate graffiti **very** seriously. To that end, these incidents are under investigation by our Bias Crimes Unit. Anyone having information that may lead to the identification and arrest those involved are encouraged to call our **Bias Crimes Unit** at **206-233-3898**.

Be Aware!

- Keep your eyes open and report any suspicious activity in your neighborhood.

Report It!

- If you see graffiti vandalism in progress, **call 911**.
- When graffiti appears, whether on your private property or on city/government property, report it. Call the Seattle Police Department's non-emergency number, **206-625-5011**.
- Also call the Graffiti Hot Line **206-684-7587** to report graffiti on public or private property, including Metro bus stops/shelters.

Paint it out!

Until next time, Take Care and Stay Safe!

Mark Solomon, South Precinct Crime Prevention Coordinator